

REMARKS

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 1-4, 6 and 8-10 have been amended. Claims 5, 14 and 17 have been cancelled. Claims 1-4, 6-13, 15 and 16 are pending and under consideration.

CLAIM OBJECTIONS

Claim 3 was objected to because of an informality. Appropriate correction to claim 3 has been made in accordance with the Examiner's suggestion. Withdrawal of the foregoing objection is requested.

CLAIM REJECTIONS

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Yamaguchi et al. (JP 2002-256895).

Claim 3 was rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Evans et al. (US 5,651,343).

Claims 1 and 3 have been amended to include the allowable subject matter of claims 2 and 5, respectively, and are therefore believed to be allowable for at least the foregoing reasons.

Withdrawal of the foregoing rejections is requested.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

The Applicant acknowledges with appreciation that claims 2 and 4-17 have been found to contain allowable subject matter. The allowable subject matter of claim 5 and its base claim 1 has been combined and placed into newly amended independent claim 2 in order to improve the form of the application, namely the sequence of claims and related dependent claims. Claims 5, 14 and 17 have been cancelled. It is respectfully submitted that claims 2, 4, 6-13, 15 and 16, as well as newly amended claims 1 and 3 as noted above, are allowable in their present condition.

CONCLUSION

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

Date: August 7, 2006
By: 
David M. Pitcher
Registration No. 25,908

1201 New York Avenue, NW, 7th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 434-1500
Facsimile: (202) 434-1501